In spite of certain continuities, the life of a teenager from the 1960’s through 2010 resulted in vast technological, economical and social changes. Essentially, these changes were beneficial to the current teenager as he or she progresses through their teenage years. The main continuities are that parents are continually worried about the financial expenses of a teenager, music influences the life of a teenager, and the importance of social groups in a teenagers’ life. The major changes freedom of expression, financial concerns at home, and the impact of technology on the life of a teenager. I will be comparing the continuities and changes of the teenage years of my uncle Reg Wilson (1961-1965) and myself (2008-2010).

Technology has always been a key factor in determining the outcome of the life of a person. For example, technology is scarce in Africa; therefore, there was not enough preparation to prepare the people of Haiti for the tragic earthquake that devasted hundreds of thousands of Haitians. Technology in the 1960’s was very limited because of the fact that the United States was locked in a Cold War with the USSR. Social technology was overlooked because there was such a high demand for war technology. Subsequently, the low level of development of technology led to very limited amounts of social technology being developed during the 60’s. Music has always an important factor within the life of a teenager. Teenagers in the19 60’s listened to music, just in a different method then we do now. They had cassette players that were developed in the 1950’s rather than the iPod we use to listen to music today. The demand for technology remains unchanged through the years, as people in the 60’s demanded better cars, better television reception, and better ways to communicate, a factor that deeply plays into the social life of a teenager. The hype about technology remained the same, for example, there was a big hype about color television. Everybody wanted to see it, everybody wanted to get one. Kind of like the hype about Apple releasing the new iTablet. We all know the first few production models turn out bad, and are quickly replaced, yet we still feel the rush and excitement just to own one.

The Economy, money, and financials. It all stems down to the basic fact of, “Can I provide for my family”. This has been the train of thought for every teenage parent, in the 1960’s and even now, in 2010 after recovering from the recession. The currency value now is nothing like it was in the 1960’s. In 1960, you could pump gas for 5c per gallon. But now, 5c gets you. . . well 5 pennies. When my uncle was a teenager, going to the restaurant wasn’t just an everyday luxury. It was a very big deal going out to eat. It wasn’t that restaurants were hard to come by, rather, it was because at the time, money was such an issue, that it was unheard of to go out to eat weekly like we do now. In the 1960’s, there were no such things as malls. The population wasn’t consumed in buying and needing like we do today. They focused on just simply enjoying life, through playing football at the park or sitting down for a good chat. It’s very different from my uncle’s perspective to see how teenagers today can’t seem to have fun without exhuming large amounts of money and spending it. Even though today, money is still a huge concern throughout the common family, we seem to spend it like no other. In the 1960’s, stores were usually family owned and community based. Everybody seemed to know everybody. Now when we go into a store, it’s a faceless corporation that we’re buying our everyday necessities from. Even though we still buy our groceries from stores, it’s not the same face behind the product. We’re not buying from happy family owned stores anymore. We’re buying from faceless corporations that ran those family owned stores out of business.

“O.M.G. Did you see Jersey Shore yesterday? Yeah. Totally. It made me LOL the whole time!” This. Is just one example of what’s wrong with our society today. In the 1960’s, there was no such thing as abbreviated words, or reality shows or sit at home and watch TV. In fact, my uncle did not possess a TV until he was 24. Society today is a completely alien world compared to society of the 1960’s. In the 1960’s, the counterculture movement, better known as the hippie movement, began to take full swing. The hippie movement wasn’t as terrible as everybody claims it to be. There were those that chose to participate in the hippie movement because they didn’t agree with the government, but also because they wanted to freely express themselves, unlike today where we all must face some kind of conformity, because if we choose to stick out today, we would be outcasted from social groups. However, some continuities remain true, such as the fact that even then there was a divisible line of social groups. There were the “cool” kids who seemed to be good at everything, the “nerds” who will eventually end up being the big boss of some large company, the “band geeks” who will probably end up selling records of their live performances, the “inbetween” kids who never wanted to stick out and just survive high school, and the “delinquents” who always frequented detention that will probably end up living their lives in debt. The pressure to be in a group still hasn’t changed. Teenagers still seek comfort in those that they feel are most like them. Besides, safety in numbers, right? Today, there seems to be a lot more racial segregation, not among the classrooms, but among social groups. If you walk down the halls today, you will find that the Whites hang with Whites, Asians with Asians, Blacks with Blacks. There ARE exceptions to the rule, but the majority of it remains true. Why do we do this? I believe we do this because of our culture and background, we know what our culture faces and has to go through, and as stated before, we seek comfort in those we feel that has the most in common with us. In the 1960’s, there was no such thing as “social segregation”, because there weren’t enough races to stand out and those that were quickly became those that weren’t to not be different. Another social issue that remains unchanged is that, we all seek to be “different” yet we teens make decisions that makes us the same as everyone else. We are easy victims of peer pressure and ‘the bandwagon’.

In the life of a teenager, many aspects have changed over time economically, technologically and socially. But even so, some continuities remain such as technology hype, the worry of parents about financial concerns, and the segregated social groups that divide high school. It is rather the technology that we use to listen to our music, the stores we buy our products from.